

FAN-MAKING.

Nothing delights children, who are fond of painting and drawing, more than designing fans, which could decorate the walls of either bedroom or nursery.

The paper that is used should not be too thick, as it makes it difficult to fold. When the paper is obtained, the first thing to be done is to describe a circle A, distant from the centre 9 inches. From the same centre describe another circle, B, with $\frac{1}{2}$ inches radius, and again a third circle, D, at a distance of one inch. The paper should now be cut out round the circle line A, and divided into half, to make two fans. Now is the time for the design to be painted on the space between the half circles A and B. Any Japanese or even conventional design would look pretty.

After the painting comes the folding, which is the most difficult part of the fan-making, and probably little fingers could not manage it. All the folds must radiate from the central point of the circle, where it is difficult to get them "to sit" well. It is better first to double the paper in half, quarter, and so on. The next thing to be done is to rule off a space of an eighth of an inch from the half circle B to half circle D, down the middle of each fold, and to cut out the parts from between these spaces. This gives the appearance of a frame, and looks decidedly better if painted brown to represent wood. The one each half circle at the bottom should not be cut, otherwise the fan might tear.

When all is neatly done it gives a very good effect, and can be nailed on a wall with a bow of ribbon.

J. S.

ON MRS. CURWEN'S SYSTEM OF TEACHING MUSIC.

PLEASED as you know and use Mrs. Curwen's "Child Pianist" with your children; but in case there are some who have not heard about it, or still worse, have only heard of it from people who have taken it up half-heartedly, I want to tell you how much it has helped me to make my children's music a delight to them. We really took it up seriously after a lecture Mrs. Curwen gave in Macclesfield, to which we went. She and her little boy also stayed with us the night of the lecture, so we had a good talk over things, and saw how thoroughly her little boy understood all the groundwork of music. So I determined to try and use her methods regularly and see the results; and here I may say neither of my children are really musical, by nature, though they love their music lessons and are really interested. The whole system is so fully explained in the "Teacher's Guide" that I need not enter into many details. Speaking of the "Teacher's Guide," I must add that it is really impossible to teach this system properly without it. It explains simply and clearly the plan on which the children should be taught. Mrs. Curwen's great rule is "one thing at a time," and the lessons are entirely arranged on this plan.

Instead of setting a poor child down to read a new piece, and expecting it to attend to fingering, time, and notes all at once, Mrs. Curwen's lessons begin with *note-finding* (or *locality*) first, then a line where the notes follow each other in such easy succession there is nothing but *fingering* to think of; then comes *time*. Here the child plays on one note, with the same finger always, and need only give his attention to the time. When he has gone through these exercises, he is ready (and delighted) to take time and tune together.

The lessons are so well graduated that the child overcomes difficulties unconsciously at the same time that a thorough foundation is being laid.

A great many people, at first sight, do not see the object of the time-names, and think them confusing, but I do not think anyone who has not given them a fair trial is in a position to judge. They

are really most simple, and by using them children acquire such a thorough understanding of the various values of the notes that time ceases to puzzle them, and enormously lessens the difficulty of reading.

I must say that the tonic sol-fa, though not absolutely necessary to the success of the system, is a great advantage, and, far from the two methods creating confusion in the child's mind, the sol-fa helps to simplify the old notation. To me, one of the greatest charms of this system is, that children are introduced to good music at once; the duets are delightful and most beautifully harmonised, and the exercises tuneful enough. It is delightful to compare the pleasure children take in their music, when taught by this system, with the case of a little boy, of whom I heard lately, who had learnt music for two years, and whose conscientious teacher still kept him entirely to scales and exercises.

J. H.

RESUME OF MISS MASON'S SPEECH.

AFTER having expressed her pleasure at meeting so many friends interested in the F.N.E.U., Miss Mason went on to speak of the Society itself. She showed how during the nine or ten years of its existence it has been growing in all directions, and has been sending out new branches everywhere. Not only have most of these branches become self-supporting, but some have shown their strength and stability by continually increasing in numbers, and also by sending out new branches from themselves, and by increasing the number of lectures, thus proving that the Society has in itself the *principle of life*. A society, just as much as an individual, lives only as it grows, feeds, and produces—as it feeds on new ideas, as it grows in numbers, in strength, and in wisdom, and as it produces new forms of energy and new branches. All these forms of vital activity are found in the F.N.E.U.

Another great characteristic of the Society is its *sanity*—it is essentially a society of parents, and one of the first articles of the creed of the Society is that parents are the wisest and best people in the world—that they are endowed with a special wisdom to enable them to fulfil the work given them to do. Perhaps one

proof of the sanity of the parents is that they are ready to take into their society those who are not parents, and are willing to listen to their advice, thereby acknowledging that though they feel themselves to be the best readers of the individual character of their children, there are points on which the help of an outsider is invaluable.

The sanity of the Society as a whole has certainly been shown in the sweet reasonableness with which the work has been carried on—when it was first started it was felt that it covered such a large field, and would include such diverse minds, that there would be many dangers and difficulties in the way of its growth, but such has not been the case. The Society has gone on quietly, unadvertised, unadvertised, but always steadily and surely growing.

Perhaps it is a proud boast to say that the next great characteristic is that it is *humble*. The Students of the House of Education have touched the key-note of the Society in having chosen as their lodge the *rush*, the central idea of which is humility. The Society distinguishes between opinions and knowledge—its great aim is not to spread abroad opinions, but to gain knowledge. It hears of new ideas which seem worth knowing; it seeks out those who know most about these ideas, and then makes them its own. Its rule is to listen, to learn, to read, and, then only, to talk. In this way is gathered into this Society such a body of living educational thought as perhaps has never been collected in the world before, and this it has gathered from all sources.

It is thus shown to be a living society, a sane society, a humble society.

One great feature of the Society is the method of teaching adopted. We teach not the "ics" and "ologies," but Nature and Human Nature—these, in fact, cover the whole aim of our teaching. Our Nature teaching is of a living kind—we are anxious that our children should know how a plant lives, and how it grows, rather than that they should pull it in pieces and know how to describe it in technical terms. We venerate life exceedingly, and feel how lovely it is, and teach its loveliness. All communication with life is a source of life, and the more we study and love life the more we live, so it is to Nature herself and to Nature as she is that we take the children, and thus help them constantly to lay in life. If the children are taught to know and love the flowers and birds their own inquisitiveness will do away with almost all need of text books for them, and will also make their elders study Nature more closely so as to be able to answer their questions. The story of the foundation of a branch is almost always the same—the branch is